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REMARKS

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
And Haitian President Rene Preval
After Their Meeting**

**March 9, 2010
Treaty Room
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY CLINTON: Good morning. Let me begin by saying how honored we are to have President Preval here at the State Department. Everyone knows how devastated Haiti was by the earthquake of January the 12th. The Haitian people suffered so greatly and the Haitian Government was severely damaged. President Preval, Prime Minister Bellerive, the members of the cabinet, and the presidential staff, along with the people of Haiti themselves, have worked very hard these last two months to recover.

The United States and the international community mounted the largest ever rescue and relief effort. Progress has been made, but not nearly enough, and therefore, we are holding these meetings with President Preval today and tomorrow and the next day to discuss in depth what we need to do still to alleviate suffering and what we will do together to help build back Haiti better. The United States alone in this first phase has supplied nearly \$700 million in assistance. Nearly one half of all households in America have contributed something to private relief efforts.

We are preparing for the major donors conference in New York on March 31st, and we are listening very carefully to President Preval and the voices of the Haitian people as to what our next steps should be. President Preval made the very important point that we must work toward elections to ensure the stability and legitimacy of the Haitian Government. I assured President Preval that the United States would work with the international community to hold elections as soon as appropriate.

There are many specific problems that must be addressed, from how we get people into safe housing before and during the rainy season, to how we provide fertilizer and seed to Haiti's farmers so that they can begin planting, to how we get Haiti's factories going again and start new factories throughout the country, how we convince other countries to extend the same favorable tariffs that the United States does under the HOPE program.

So this is truly a working meeting, Mr. President, and I want to assure you again that the United States and President Obama and our Administration remain committed to you. We believe in Haiti's promise and we are committed to Haiti's future.

PRESIDENT PREVAL: (Via interpreter) Thank you, Madam Secretary. But first of all, please allow me to express my condolences to all of the Americans who were victims during the earthquake of January 12th in Haiti.

And also, please allow me to express my deepest thanks to you, my deepest thanks to the American people, to the American Congress, the American Government, to you, Madam Secretary and to your staff, to President Obama and to Mrs. Obama, for all of the help and support that you have provided to Haiti after the earthquake of January 12th. And of course, the support provided to Haiti by the United States did not start at this earthquake. In fact, it came way before that.

So we must work together to ensure the conditions that will allow the recovery of Haiti. And all of these conditions have to be worked upon – not just the immediate short-term needs but we must also work towards the long term – good governance, all of investments that have to be encouraged.

Today, we are faced with a historical situation that will allow us to rebuild, re-found this country. In the past, everything had been concentrated and focused on the capital, where the political and economic elites of the country live, and the rest of the country was neglected. That's why so many people came to Haiti – into Port-au-Prince – in the illusory quest for work that did not exist, and that is why there's so much shoddy construction, which does not comply with standards, and that's why there were so many casualties. And that's why when people leave the provinces, that's why each time there is a flood, there are so many deaths. Just last Sunday, there were 15 deaths due to flooding.

So this is an opportunity to not only rebuild Port-au-Prince, but first and foremost, to invest and to rebuild in the provinces. And of course, the recovery of Haiti will take a long time, and everybody must be aware of that. To rebuild Port-au-Prince as it was before would be a major historical mistake, and that is the message that I am trying to convey not only to the Haitians but also to my international partners.

So in summary, what I would say – let's take the time necessary to think about this process about how we should rebuild Haiti. So let's establish the conditions that will be favorable to a good economic stability and good political governance. Voila.

SECRETARY CLINTON: I think we have time maybe for one or two, because we have to be at the White House.

Yeah.

MR. CROWLEY: Lach Carmichael, Agence France-Presse.

QUESTION: Good morning to both of you. For President Preval, please: Secretary Clinton mentioned organizing elections as soon as possible. Could you give us a timeframe for when these elections could be organized? And for reasons fair or unfair, do you think this would help establish your legitimacy more, following a lot of criticism? And how would it help you accomplish goals, even short term goals, for the country?

PRESIDENT PREVAL: (Via interpreter) Political stability is something fundamental for the development of a country. I think that is what constitutes a guarantee for investors, for the population, that there is some guarantees, that there's some security about their future. We need a parliament that's operating, that functions, that votes laws. You need an executive power, you need a judicial power. The parliamentary elections had been scheduled for February, but of course, everybody will understand that, due to the conditions, how difficult it will be to respect that timetable and to organize elections.

As you know, the country has been severely impacted. The electoral body has been deeply affected. MINUSTAH, which was supporting us, was accompanying us, has been deeply affected. The OAS has been affected. And of course, there have been many casualties. All of the death toll has not been fully counted. There have been many people. So we have to find a way, and the experts will indeed help us find a way to ensure that by the time of my departure, we will find the right way to organize elections.

We must find the right way. We should not try to do things too (inaudible), because we did have some very good systems in place. We did have some maps that existed. But what we must absolutely avoid is that we have a temporary provisional government that does not enjoy legitimacy. We must have a government that does have political legitimacy.

SECRETARY CLINTON: And we will work --

QUESTION: And what about --

SECRETARY CLINTON: I'm so sorry, Lachlan, if you will give your question to P.J. We have to be at the White House literally in two minutes. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT PREVAL: Thank you. Thank you.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you.

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